My NCBI Help

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What Is My NCBI?

My NCBI is a tool that retains user information and preferences to provide customized services. It allows you to save searches, select filtering options, and set up automatic searches that are sent by email. To be able to use My NCBI, your Web browser must accept cookies. If your Web browser is set to block pop-ups, you will need to allow pop-ups from NCBI Web pages to use My NCBI.

Getting Started

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Accessing My NCBI

The My NCBI box appears at the top right of the screen on all Entrez databases pages. To see the My NCBI box, choose a database from the Search pull-down menu and click Go.

Note that the box does not appear on the NCBI homepage [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov].

Registering with My NCBI

1. Click on Register in the My NCBI box.

2. Enter a user name (3 to 10 alpha-numeric characters) and a password (6 to 8 alpha-numeric characters).

3. Choose a security question that allows your password to be reset, if necessary.

4. Below the Security Question, you will see an image with 5 characters. Type the characters into the box provided; the characters are case sensitive. This prevents automated programs from adding accounts to My NCBI.

5. Enter an email address if you want to receive updates of search results periodically (this option is not available in all Entrez databases).

6. When you provide an email address with your registration, you soon receive an email from NCBI requesting that you confirm your email address by clicking on the link that is provided.

7. After confirming your email address, you can start setting up automatic emails for search alerts. More information on automatic emails is provided in Setting Up Automatic Email Updates.

Note:

- Keep your user name for future reference. This information will not be emailed to you.

- Only one email address can be associated with each account.

Signing In and Out

1. Click on Sign In, in the My NCBI box.

2. Enter your user name and password.

3. Check the Keep me signed in unless I sign out box to automatically activate My NCBI the next time you use NCBI resources. You can sign out at any time by clicking on Sign Out in the My NCBI box.

Note:

- A checked Keep me signed in unless I sign out box saves your My NCBI preferences on your computer in a persistent cookie file. To read some important information about the cookie file that is created, click on About automatic sign in, in the Sign In box.

- If the Keep me signed in unless I sign out box is not checked, you will be automatically signed out when you close the internet browser.

- You may sign out at any time, regardless of how you signed in (session-only or automatic sign in).

If You Forget Your Password

1. Click on Sign In and select I forgot my password.

2. Enter your user name.

3. Click Next.

4. Answer the security question.

5. You will be instructed to set up a new password.

6. Click Change.

Changing Your Password

1. Once signed in, click on Change Password in the My NCBI blue sidebar. To see the My NCBI blue sidebar, click on My NCBI (while signed in), located at the top right of any Entrez database page (**A** in the image).

2. Enter your old and new passwords.

3. Click Change.

Saving and Managing Searches

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- Running Saved Searches and Checking for New Results

- Sorting Searches

- Deleting a Search

Saving a Search in My NCBI

1. On any Entrez database page, run a search.

2. Click on Save Search, located next to the search box (**B** in the image below). A new window opens up. Answer the questions.

3. Click OK.

Note:

- Your saved searches will be listed in the My Saved Searches box, which can be accessed by clicking on My NCBI, located at the top right of any Entrez page (**A** in the image above). Searches are grouped per database and listed by the date and time they were saved for the first time.

- The maximum number of searches is 100 per user name.

- Saved searches cannot be edited.

Setting Up Automatic Email Updates

In most Entrez databases, when you click on Save Search (**B** in the image above) you are asked if you would like to receive email updates of new search results automatically. Automatic email updates of search results are available in most Entrez databases and are sent according to a

schedule that you determine. You can choose their display and format and add some text to them (up to 200 characters). The text, which appears in the body of your email updates, can be used to create a title for your search or to add any specific information you want.

Automatic email updates can only be sent to email addresses that have been confirmed. See Registering with My NCBI for more information. Automatic email updates that bounce back three times will no longer be sent.

In the rare case of technical problems, updates may miss some citations. Users receiving automatic updates should use the option to link to view complete results in PubMed to minimize the risk.

Changing the Email Schedule of Your Updates

To change the schedule of an automatic email update set previously, click on My NCBI at the top right of the screen (**A** in the image above). The My Saved Searches box appears. Click on the email schedule in the Details column of the search you want to change (**C** in the image below). You will be pointed to the same box where you first saved the search and set up the email schedule. You can then change the email schedule or any other settings you want.

To unsubscribe from an email update, click on the link that is provided in the email update sent to you.

Running Saved Searches and Checking for New Results

When signed in to My NCBI, click on My NCBI at the top right of the screen. A click on the name of the search (**A** in the image below) runs your saved search again but does not change the date displayed in the Last Updated column (**B**). Mouse over the information to display the actual date of the last update (the date will appear only after you have clicked on the page, making it active).

If you have set up an email schedule for receiving search updates, this information is displayed in the Details column (**C**). For searches that you have not set up a schedule or which were run in databases that do not offer this feature, you will see No Schedule displayed in the Details column.

To check for new results, select a search and click on What's New for Selected (**D**). A hyperlinked number is displayed indicating how many new items were found. Click on this hyperlink to view the new items. This action will update the information in the Last Updated column. If you do not click on the hyperlink to see the new items, the date and time of your search in the Last Updated column will remain the same.

Not all databases support automatic updates. In this case, the option What's New for Selected is not available, and the updates need to be done manually.

Sorting Searches

To sort Saved Searches, click the descending or ascending arrow next to the column headings on the Saved Searches screen. A pink arrow indicates the currently selected sort option. Collections can be sorted:

- alphabetically by name (A in the image below)

- date last updated (B in the image below)

- number of items in the collection (C in the image below)

Deleting a Search

1. In My Saved Searches box, check the box next to the name of the search you want to delete.

2. Click Delete Selected.

Saving Search Results

Search results from Entrez databases can be saved in My NCBI using the Collections feature.

- You can save up to 100 Collections/Searches (combined) in a My NCBI account. Create a new My NCBI account if you need more than 100 saved searches or collections.

- Up to 1500 items (Entrez database records) can be saved in a Collection.

  For an animated demonstration of some features of My NCBI Collections, see the My NCBI Collections Quick Tour [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/viewlet/myncbi/collections_viewlet_swf.html]. Demonstrations are conducted in the PubMed database. Macromedia Flash™ Player [http://www.macromedia.com/shockwave/download/download.cgi?P1_Prod_Version=ShockwaveFlash] is required to view this tutorial.

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- Creating Collections

- Adding Search Results to Existing Collections

- Viewing Collections

- Sorting Collections

- Viewing Collection Contents

- Deleting Items from a Collection

- Merging Collections

- Renaming Collections

Creating Collections

To save search results to a collection, they must first be sent to the Clipboard, then to My NCBI Collections. To do this:

1. Perform a search in any Entrez database.

2. From the search results page, click the check box next to the item number for **items you want to save**.

3. Select Clipboard from the Send to pull-down menu. (If you do not select items, all search results on the current page will be sent to the Clipboard. The Clipboard will hold up to 500 items. Note the asterisk on the Clipboard tab indicating that there are items on the Clipboard and the message displaying the number of items added to the Clipboard. You may continue adding items to the Clipboard (up to 500 items).

4. When you have selected all items that you want to save in the Collection, click on the Clipboard tab to go to the Clipboard. If necessary, select the items that you want to save to this Collection by clicking the checkbox next to the item number. If no items are selected, all items in the Clipboard will be added to this Collection.

5. Select My NCBI Collections from the Send to pull-down menu, as shown in the image below.
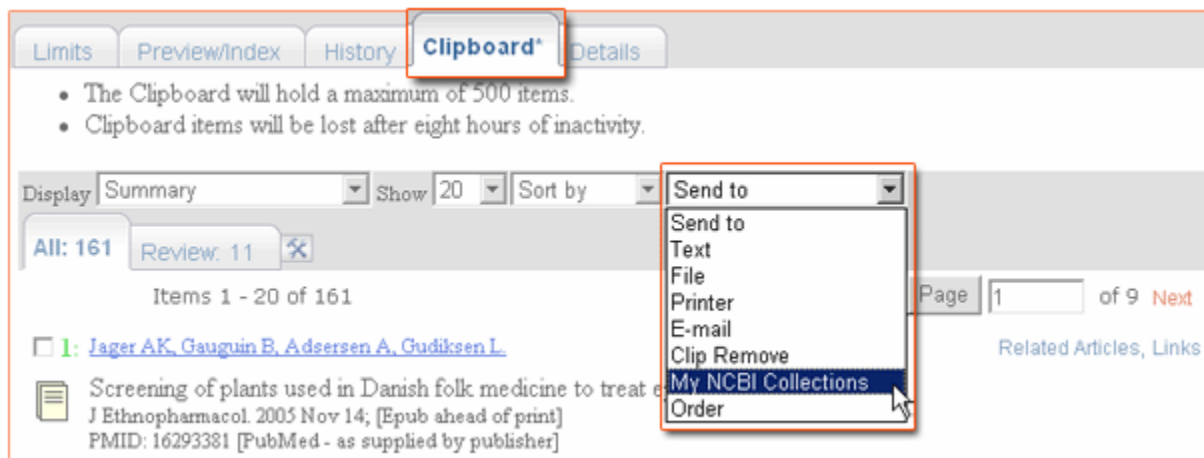
6. A Save Collection pop-up window will display. Create new collection will be selected (**A** in the image below).

7. My NCBI will create a default collection name using the number of items you are saving in the collection (**B** in the image below). You should rename your collection using a short, yet meaningful, title. Be careful when naming Collections. Identical names for different Collections are allowed and may cause confusion.

8. If you want to remove **all** of the items added to the Collection from the Clipboard, click the checkbox next to Remove these items from clipboard (**C** in the image below).

9. Click OK to finish (**D** in the image below).
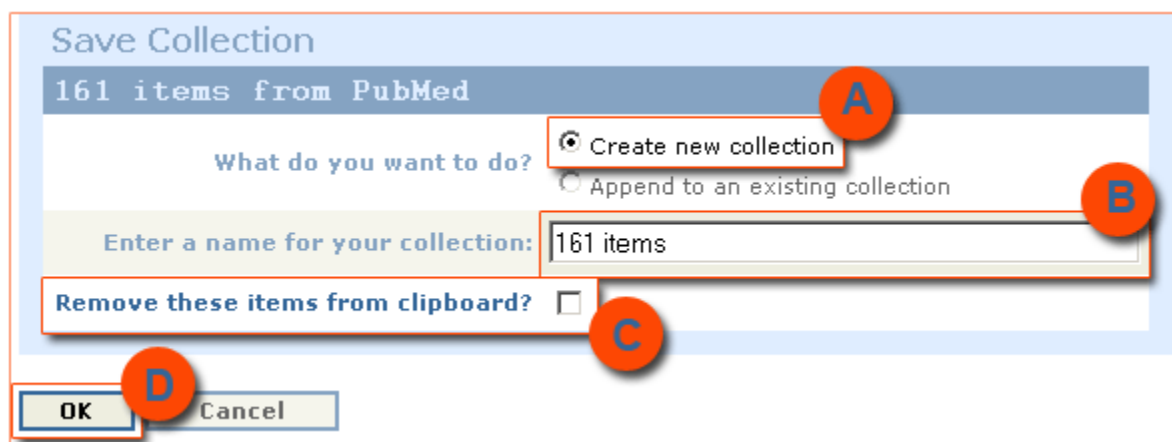
Adding Search Results to Existing Collections

To add search results to an existing collection, follow steps 1 – 5 above under Creating Collections. On the Save Collection pop-up window, select Append to an existing collection (**A** in the image below). The window will change to display a Collections pull-down menu with your collections listed (**B** in the image below). Choose the collection to which you want to add items and click OK (**C** in the image below).

A collection may contain up to 1500 items.

Viewing Collections

To view your collections, click on My NCBI in the blue sidebar menu from any Entrez database. If you are not already signed in to My NCBI, you will be prompted to sign in.

Click on the Collections tab (see image below) to view the Collections screen.

Like saved searches, saved collections will be grouped by database if you save Collections from multiple Entrez databases (e.g. Nucleotide, Protein, PubMed).

From this screen, you can sort your collections, view Collection Details, or view the Collection in its source database.

Click the check box on the Collections tab to select all Collections.

Sorting Collections

To sort Collections, click the descending or ascending arrow next to the column headings on the Collections screen. A pink arrow indicates the currently selected sort option. Collections can be sorted:

- alphabetically by name (A in the image below)

- date last modified (B in the image below)

- number of items in the collection (C in the image below)

Viewing Collection Contents

To view a list of Collection contents, click on the number of items in the collection under Details on the Collections Screen (A in the image below). If a Collection contains more than 11 items, the Collection Details will be displayed in Brief format. Collections with fewer than 11 items will be displayed in Summary format.

To view the Collection in its source database, click on the Collection Name (B in the image below) in the list of Collections under the Collections tab. A History search statement number will be created when a Collection is displayed in its source database.

Deleting Items from a Collection

To delete items from a collection, click on the number of items in the collection under Details on the Collections Screen. Click the checkbox next to items you want to delete and click the Delete Selected button, as shown in the image below. A pop-up window will ask to you confirm the deletion.

Merging Collections

To merge Collections, select the Collections you want to merge by clicking the checkbox next to the Collection name on the Collections screen. Click the Merge Selected Collections button, shown in the image below.

You will see the Merge Collections pop-up window. Name the newly merged Collection using a short, yet meaningful, title. To remove the original, separate Collections, click the checkbox next to Delete collections being merged. Click OK to merge the Collections.

Renaming Collections

To change the name of a Collection, click on the number of items in the collection under Details on the Collections Screen. Enter the new name for the Collection (A in the image below). Then click OK (B in the image below).

Using Preferences

The My NCBI User Preferences can be found in the blue sidebar of the My NCBI page (to see the My NCBI blue sidebar, click on My NCBI located at the top right of any Entrez database page). My NCBI User Preferences currently allows you to change the display of the links menu, update your email address for automatic search updates, activate search term highlighting, and select a single citation display format in PubMed.

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- Changing the Display of the Links Menu

- Changing Your Email Address

- Highlighting Search Terms in PubMed Searches

- Setting the PubMed Single Citation Display Format

Changing the Display of the Links Menu

Users can change the display of the Links menu on any Entrez results page. To learn about Links, see the Entrez Help Document. The default display is a JavaScript menu, which may not work properly with some browsers. To change the display format of the Links menu, make a selection from the Links display pull-down menu. The available formats are:

- Plain Links: Displays links as separate selections; does not use JavaScript.

- Standard pull-down: Displays links as a pull-down menu; uses limited JavaScript.

- Pop-up Window: Opens a separate small window with link selections.

Changing Your Email Address

To change your email address for receiving email updates:

1. Click on User Preferences in the My NCBI sidebar.

2. Enter an email address.

3. Click OK. A new confirmation email will be sent to you.

Highlighting Search Terms in PubMed Searches

You can choose to have your search terms highlighted in retrieved citations when you search PubMed. By default this option is off, but you can pick one of the four colors available in My NCBI User Preferences to have your search terms highlighted. The highlighting will be visible when your search results are displayed in one of the following formats: Summary, Abstract, Brief, and Citation.

Sometimes you will find terms other than the one(s) you have used as a query highlighted in the abstract. For example, if you search PubMed using the term cancer, you will also find citations with the term neoplasm highlighted. That is because Entrez has a dictionary of synonymous terms, such as cancer and neoplasm, that are equally considered when you search a database using one of them. Therefore PubMed will retrieve all citations that have the term cancer and/or the term neoplasm in their abstracts, and each term will be highlighted every time it occurs in a citation. To find out what synonymous terms PubMed has considered in your search, check the details tab as shown in the image below.

In some cases, you will retrieve documents that have no highlighting in its abstract, which means that neither the search term nor a synonymous word was found in the abstract of the article. However, terms that appear as MeSH terms or Substances on a record will be highlighted in the citation format of the record. For example, a search in PubMed with the term ABCD4 retrieves, among others, the following record that does not have the term ABCD4 (or any synonymous term) in its abstract: The four murine peroxisomal ABC-transporter genes differ in constitutive, inducible and developmental expression.

If you check the citation format by selecting Citation from the Display pull-down menu (see image below), you will see that the term ABCD4 appears in the record.

Note:

MeSH is the National Library of Medicine's controlled vocabulary thesaurus. It consists of sets of terms naming descriptors in a hierarchical structure that permits searching at various levels of specificity. Click here [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/mesh.html] for more information on MeSH terms.

Setting the PubMed Single Citation Display Format

When a PubMed search returns multiple citations, the results display in the Summary format. From the Summary format, a click on the author name(s) or the icon to the left of each citation takes you to the AbstractPlus format for the single citation. You can change the default display format for a single citation by selecting a new format from the PubMed Single Citation Display dropdown menu.

Working with Filters

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The Filter Display

Search results are grouped into subsets by filters. For example, in PubMed, filters can be used to group results into reviews, or clinical trials, among other choices. In My NCBI, you can select your favorite filter to be active every time you run a search.In the figure below, three filters have been activated: Clinical Trial, English, and Review. Filtered results with their respective counts are dis-

played as result tabs, next to the All tab, which contains the complete list of records retrieved in each search. In the example below, a search in PubMed with the term *cancer* has generated 1,675,581 citations (that are all included in the All tab), of which 58,865 are grouped in the Clinical Trial result tab; 1,269,872 are in English; and 185,670 citations are in Review. Up to five filters are allowed per database.

Setting Up Your Filters

To set up you filter selection, click on Filters in the sidebar of the My NCBI screen. Choose the database in which you want to set your filter preferences and select the filters you want to use. My NCBI has a list of commonly requested filters (Quick Pick), but other filters are available (see image below).

In Browse, you can browse a list of filters that is divided in three categories: LinkOut, Links, and Properties. LinkOut and Properties are divided into subcategories that might include additional sub-categories. Records that have links to resources provided by outside organizations can be grouped using LinkOut (more on LinkOut). Records that have links to other Entrez databases can be grouped using Links. For example, you can select Links to OMIM to create a result tab that groups all records retrieved in a search that have links to OMIM. The result tab is active every time you search any Entrez database (see image below).

Properties groups records according to specific criteria such as language, gender, age group, or publication date.

After you make your selections you can create a result tab by checking the box that says Add a result tab for all items that match this filter. In the case of LinkOut and Properties, you can choose to have either a single filter added to your search results or an entire category or subcategory.

If you know the name of the filter you are interested in, you can search for filter names and descriptions using the Search tab. To see your active filters and icon settings, check My Selections.

Some databases have a default set of result tabs that are active whether you have a My NCBI account or not. Default filters can be replaced by your filter selection, which can also be accessed and changed from all Entrez results pages. When on a results page, look for an icon showing a hammer and a wrench displayed to the right of the filter tabs (see also the image above). A click on this icon will point you to the filters box in My NCBI.

Using My NCBI to Set Up LinkOut

LinkOut is a feature of Entrez that links individual records retrieved in a search to a variety of external resources, such as full-text publications, biological databases, consumer health information, and research tools. The available links are supplied by outside providers interested in linking their resources to Entrez databases. Not every record in Entrez has links to external resources.

To set up LinkOut, start by selecting Filters in My NCBI in the same way you would set up any filter, as explained in the previous section. Select the database in which you want LinkOut to be displayed. You can either browse or search the list of available external resources.

To search the list (**A** in the example below), enter the name of a provider (**B**) in the search box. Then click Go (**C**). The name of the provider, if available, will be displayed as a hyperlink in Matching filters. Click on the name of the provider (**E**).

As explained earlier, there are three types of available filters; LinkOut is one of them (**D**).

After you click on the name of the provider in Matching filters (**E** in the example above), a new page is displayed showing two possible selections (see image below):

Although these two possibilities are shown regardless of the database you have selected, the Add a link icon to every item that matches this filter is only available to users of PubMed. In any other database, LinkOut can only be displayed as result tabs. The link icon display might be available in other Entrez databases in the future.

The image below shows LinkOut displayed as link icons, available in PubMed only.

You can also use My NCBI to browse a list of available external resources and providers. To do this, start by selecting Filters in My NCBI, as explained previously. Select the database in which you want LinkOut to be displayed. Click on Browse and select LinkOut. Choose a subcategory of LinkOut and proceed as described in the beginning of this section. Remember that the icon display is available only to users of PubMed.

You can also choose to have LinkOut icons included in your automatic email updates of searches done in PubMed (to learn about automatic email updates, see Setting Up Automatic Email Updates). To do this, select Abstract as the display format for your emails when setting up your search alert. If available, all LinkOut icons that you have selected in My NCBI will be included in your email alerts, together with your PubMed search updates.

Other Resources at My NCBI

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- Document Delivery
- Outside Tool

Document Delivery Service

Document Delivery Service (DDS) is a feature of PubMed that allows you to order articles described in PubMed citations from an institution of your choice. By default, orders are sent to Loansome Doc [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/loansome_doc.html], the document delivery service of the National Library of Medicine. To change the DDS for your orders, select a service from the list of institutions found under Document Delivery in the My NCBI sidebar. After you have made your selection, your orders will be sent to the selected institution.

Please note that Document Delivery Service providers may restrict the service to affiliated users or may charge for document delivery.

To order documents, click the checkbox next to the article(s) you want to order. When you are ready to order, select Order from the Send to pull-down menu, as shown below. You will be directed to the Document Delivery Service form.
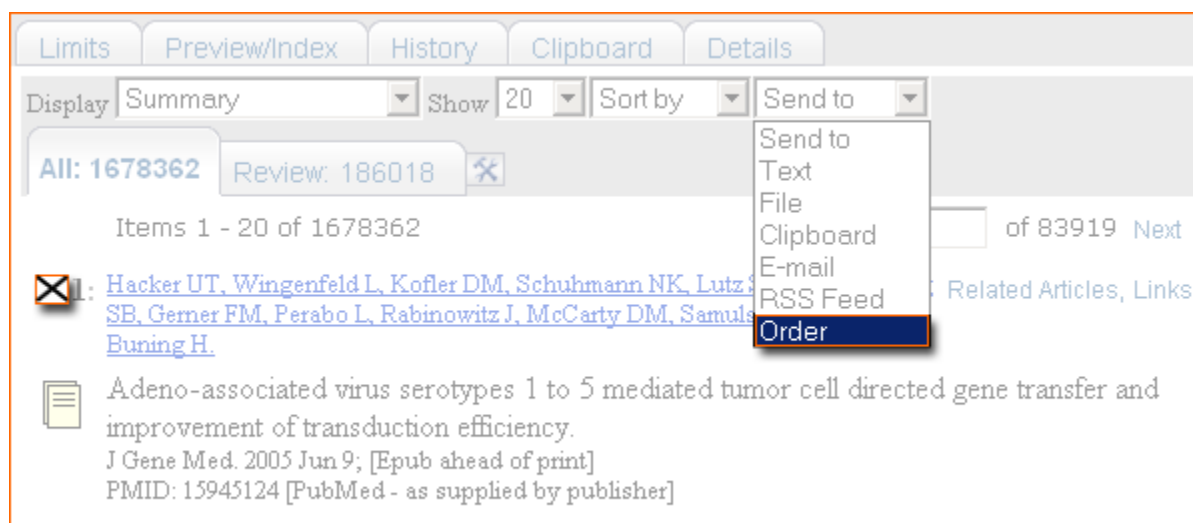
You can mark several citations to be included in a single order. Alternatively, before ordering all your selections, you can save them temporarily in the Clipboard. To send your selections to the Clipboard, proceed as described before but select Clipboard from the Send to pull-down menu, instead of Order. When you have decided what articles you want to order, click the Clipboard tab. In the Clipboard, you do not need to check the articles you want to order but you do need to check the ones you do not want. To remove unwanted articles from the Clipboard, select Clip Remove from the Send to pull-down menu. When you are ready to order, select Order from the Send to pull-down menu. You will be directed to the Document Delivery Service form. Complete the requested information.

Your DDS selection is active only while signed into My NCBI. When you sign out, the DDS default choice is restored. Document delivery services sponsored by some institutions might be available only to users of that institution. Some institutions may also charge a fee for their services.

Outside Tool

Outside Tool allows libraries to add a link from PubMed citations to a link resolver available at their institution. These links are displayed as icons in PubMed's Abstract, AbstractPlus, and Citation displays (see image below).

When you click on the icon, you are directed to the available services for that citation offered by the sponsoring library. These services might include access to electronic full text or information on local print holdings.

To turn on an Outside Tool, click on Outside Tool in the My NCBI sidebar. Select an institution from the available list. After you have done that, the selected icon display in PubMed's Abstract, AbstractPlus, and Citation formats. To learn how to change the display format of your results, see the Entrez Help Document.

Keep in mind that most Outside Tools are fully accessible only to individuals affiliated with the sponsoring institution.

Tutorials

Three tutorials on how to use My NCBI with PubMed have been produced by the National Library of Medicine. The features shown in these tutorials are not available to all Entrez databases.

Getting Started with My NCBI [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/viewlet/myncbi/getting_started.html]

How to register, sign in and out, change your password, and what to do if you forget your password (approximately 5 min., revised June 2005).

Saving Searches [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/viewlet/myncbi/saving_searches.html]

How to save a PubMed search, have your results sent to your email account, or run your search later (approximately 4 min., revised June 2005).

Filters [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/viewlet/myncbi/filters.html]

How to create filters (approximately 7 min., revised June 2005).